towards productivity. This category of awards are 8 in number and carries a cash prize each of Rs. 40,000/-.

**Besides the cash prize, awardees also receive a** "SANAD"

The Screening Committee consists of Secretary (Labour) as Chairman and an officer not below the level of Joint Secretary each from Prime Minister's Office, Cabinet Secretariat Ministry of Home Affairs and Department of Public Enterprises.

It is not true that the BHEL employees have been awarded the Prime Minister's Shram Awards in the last sixteen consecutive years. The BHEL employees have not received the award for the year 2001. However, BHEL employees working in their different units in the country have been awarded from the year 1985 to 2000 consecutively.

Since the inception of these Awards in 1985, 388 employees have received these awards either individually or jointly. The category wise details of the awards given are as under:

| Category of Award | Shram Ratna | Shram Bhushan | Shram Vir | Shram Shri/ Shram Devi | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of employees received Awards | 10 | 89 | 153 | 136 | 388 |

**Increase in unemployment**

*108. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ:
SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that unemployment is gradually increasing in the country;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) what steps are being taken to wipe out unemployment; and

(d) how many persons were registered with various employment exchanges in the years 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and so far in 2002 for employment?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (d) As per the Labour Force Survey conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) during the year 1993-94 and 1999- 2000, the number of unemployed persons has marginally gone up from around 75 lakh in 1993-94 to 90 lakh in 1999-2000 as per Usual Status Approach. The main reason for increase in the unemployed persons was that the economy did not grow at the desired rate to provide employment opportunties to all the new entrants to the labour force and the backlog of the unemployed.

The approach to the Tenth Plan focusses on providing gainful high quality employment to the additions to the labour force and it is listed as one of the monitorable objectives for the 10th Plan and beyond. The growth strategy of the 10th Plan would lay emphasis on rapid growth of those sectors which are likely to create high quality employment opportunities and deal with the policy constraints which discourage growth of employment. Particular attention would be paid to the policy environment influencing a wide range of economic activities which have a large employment potential.

The total number of job seekers, all of whom are not necessarily unemployed, registered with various Employment Exchanges in the country during the years (January to December) 1999, 2000 and 2001 were 59.7, 60.4 and 55.5 lakh respectively.

**Telephone Facility in Villages in Almora District**

*109. CHAUDHARY HARMOHAN SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is no telephone facility in Seem, Bangga, Siyalkot, Chanuli, Sarpatta, Kunjhina, Srikot, Kota and Majhali villages of Patti Kaklashon in Almora District of Uttaranchal;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and by when this facility is likely to be provided in these areas; and

(c) the steps being proposed by Government for development of telephone network and laying of optical fibre cable in these areas?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI